



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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Virginia Man Sentenced to Five Years in Prison for Assaulting Police Officers

A Virginia man convicted of assaulting two police officers and malicious destruction of property has been sentenced to five years in prison. Thomas Howard Barr, of the 19000 block of Kings Drive in Jeffersonton, was sentenced in Howard County Circuit Court this morning.

Barr, 27, entered Alford pleas to two counts of first-degree assault and two counts of malicious destruction of property over \$1,000 at a plea hearing held on December 28, 2017. An Alford plea is a guilty plea that a defendant makes as part of a plea bargain, without actually admitting guilt, but conceding that the state has sufficient evidence to convict.

Shortly after midnight on April 1, 2017, Howard County police discovered Barr unconscious in his locked vehicle parked at a convenience store located in the 8200 block of Lark Brown Road. After failed attempts to awaken Barr, officers broke a side window to gain access for life-saving efforts. Barr awoke, started his car and fled the parking lot at a high rate of speed. Officers gave chase and followed Barr to a cul-de-sac at the end of Pirch Way where Barr departed the roadway and drove on the lawn between two residences.

An embankment blocked his way and when officers approached he shifted into reverse, striking a parked SUV which was pushed into another vehicle. He struck a third car and a police vehicle as he retraced his path along Pirch Way before losing control of his vehicle at the intersection with Old Waterloo Road. He then fled on foot and was arrested nearby, some eight hours later, after a brief struggle with police.

While acknowledging Barr's history of substance abuse, Judge Tucker sentenced him to 10 years in prison, suspending all but five years for the first-degree assault of a police officer. Barr received a fully-suspended 10-year, consecutive sentence for the first-degree assault of a second police officer. The judge also sentenced Barr to fully suspended, two-year concurrent sentences for each of the two malicious destruction of property charges. Upon release, Barr will be placed on three years of supervised probation. A judgment of restitution order for over \$3,100 was entered on behalf of the owner of two of the vehicles.

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